SPORT in XVI Century Drawings

THE recent discoveries of prehistoric designs in a cave in the south of France confirm the assertion made by mediaeval writers that as sport formed the subjects of the earliest designs, the disciples of Nimrod can rightly claim to have given the first impulse to art. Unfortunately for us, the old skin-clad sportsman artist who covered the walls of his Perigord cave with outline drawings of his fellow-denizens—the mammoth, the giant cave bear and the reindeer—thereby securing for himself undying fame as the most archaic of all artists, and endowing that underground gallery with the distinction of being the most ancient of all art repositories, failed to depict his own form divine in connection with the trotting mammoth or the shambling bear. True, the spirit of self-effacement which this omission betrays evinces a refreshing absence of the "personal element." It proves more convincingly than could a library of volumes what an infinite vista of ages intervenes between that flint-wielding cave man and the modern, self-assertive, press-the-button sportsman. But stay! Are we judging this instance of palaeontological self-obliteration quite justly? Was that troglodyte's failure to leave a single indication as to the relative position of man and beast really the result of genuine diffidence? What evidence have we that this artist of the Pleistocene Age had already emerged from that primeval condition when man was still the hunted instead of the hunter? How do we know that the huge Elephas primigenius or the formidable Ursus speloeus portrayed in that Perigord Louvre was not hunting him, the pigmy homunculus? What proof have we that these crude tracings were not drawn with trembling hand after a horror-struck retreat to his cave, when his senses, which then were still as keen as those of the hawk, the far-scenting deer, or the acutely-hearing wolverine, warned him of the approach of his relentless foe? Indeed, have we not evidence supporting such doubts in the shape of a stone hammer found embedded in the skull of a Megaceros hibernicus? Had that blow been dealt by a hunter to an animal already down in order to dispatch it, the precious flint tool, which to produce had cost such infinite labor, would not have been left where Professor Wauchoppe found it untold ages later. What more likely than that the blow was inflicted as a desperate act of self-defense on the part of the hard-pushed quarry when the antlered monster charged down upon him, crushing him to death before he had time to withdraw his invaluable flint? That bit of bone-encased rock—what tragedies of the Stone Age does it not suggest?

Ostrich-Hunting.—By Stradanus.

Elephant-Hunting by Cave Men.—J. Callaert after Stradanus.

But we have strayed far afield from the real purpose of these lines, which is none else than to make the reader acquainted with the limnings of an infinitely less remote age, but which, as samples of finished drawings of sporting scenes, yet rank among the oldest we have.

Florentine of the Florentines, though Flemish by birth, for he was born in Bruges in the year 1523, Giovanni della Strada, or to use his Latinized name with which he frequently signed his work, Joannes Stradanus, had acquired by his apprenticeship to Michael Angelo many of the famous artist's peculiarities and mannerisms, as a glance at Stradanus' prancing, heavily-maned steeds and giant-limbed men discloses. Stradanus was born at a most opportune moment, for the craving for pictorial matter making itself felt in the second half of his century was creating a demand which far exceeded the supply, and though your Bodes and Tschudis, and even earlier art critics, insist that this craving helped more than any other circumstance to prostitute art, debasing the divine inspiration of the painter to a common craft, it must not be forgotten that but for men like Stradanus, Theodore de Bry, Hans Bol, the multitudinous Galle family at Antwerp, Collaers, Wierx, Mallery, Sadeler and Goltzius, as well as the De Passe family, who all worked with extraordinary energy in turning out "pictures of the day," our knowledge of the daily life and of occurrences in that tempestuous century would be nothing like as correct and intimate as it is. What progress, for instance, art made in the half-century between 1517 and the year 1567, when Stradanus drew his one hundred and four Venationes sporting pictures, a glance at "Theuerdank," Emperor Maximilian's famous book of adventures, and at the prints appertaining to the first-named series, will show. Both the designer of the pictures and the wielder of the graver had made giant strides in the interval, and as we can see from reproductions of original drawings by Stradanus' hand, many a master of the eighteenth century would have done well to study the Italianised Fleming's method and touches.

The drawings afford amusing evidence of the widespread ignorance which then prevailed in connection with certain forms of sport. Perhaps the most characteristic in this respect is the picture of mountain sport—viz., the chase of the chamois. When one first saw the print of this picture and one's astonished gaze rested upon the delineation of the agile mountain beast carrying horns that are crooked forward instead of backward, one naturally assumed that this extraordinary mistake was made by the engraver and not by the artist who drew the animal, whose body and pose are in other respects correct. But in this one would have done the busy Antwerp engravers an injustice, as was disclosed when the original came into one's possession, for there, immortalized by master hand, prance about not one but several chamois with this curious malformation.

In other respects, too, Stradanus drew upon his imagination in concocting this drawing, for he represents the man of Michael Angelo-like limbs strapping steigeisen, or crampons, to his naked feet, which, of course, was never done. To turn to another form of sport—elephant and ostrich hunting—Stradanus in the former picture drew his quarry of very under-sized dimensions, a mistake not usually made either by him or by other artists of his age, who, as a rule, magnified the size of foreign animals. Take as an instance our reproduction of an engraving after another drawing by the same Florentine artist. Here we have elephants which if we accept the ordinary human form as our scale, must have stood something like eighteen feet high, though probably, as the inscription below tells us that the man in the act of hamstringing his quarry is a troglodyte or cave-dweller, a race who were believed to be of dwarf stature, the disproportion is intended to be as great as it is. As an early picture of elephant-hunting its amusing details, such as the long file of natives carrying off loads of dismembered elephant on their heads and shoulders, are curious enough. The picture of the bear-hunt is more true to life, though we may express some doubt whether horses could be got to charge bears in the way Stradanus pictures.

Our last drawing represents the Florentine artist's ideas of heron-hawking. It tells its tale fairly plainly, though, of course, the incidents it represents are far too crowded together. It was considered the noblest of all hawking, and though it is not so long ago that more than two hundred heronries existed in the British Isles—some of them comprising as many as a hundred nests with four or five eggs in each—the sport is now extinct. Mr. Harting tells us that in the last century Mr. Edward C. Newcome of Norfolk, who was the last English falconer who kept heron hawks (he died in 1871), killed in two seasons with his two famous hawks, Sultan and De Ruyter, which he had imported from Holland, no fewer than one hundred and eleven herons. This shows that the royal sport became extinct in England not in consequence of any dearth of herons. In the Netherlands it is still kept up, though the celebrated Hawking club at the Loo, near Apeldoorn, which Mr. Newcome, assisted by the Duke of Leeds and Mr. Stuart Wortley, had formed in the year 1832, was dissolved the very year it had reached its majority.

Chamois-Hunting.—By Stradanus.

Bear-Hunting.—By Stradanus.

One detail in Stradanus' drawing deserves special notice, i. e., the turned-up heads of the two herons at which hawks are about to stop. It shows that the artist fully believed the legend, sanctioned even by such late writers as Walter Scott, that the heron when hard pressed and stooped at by the hawk will point his beak upwards and thus receive the descending enemy upon its point, thereby inflicting serious injury, if not killing him outright. According to modern experts this pretty story has no foundation in fact. It seems extraordinary that for centuries artists went on painting incidents which they never could have seen, scores, if not hundreds, of pictures of what was once a favorite and aristocratic sport depicting this very occurrence.

Stradanus' predilection for portly men and women, as well as for steeds of the cart-horse type, and for unwieldy fat spaniels and hounds, betray his Dutch origin, and perhaps also a business-like desire to please his principal public in the lowlands and in northern Germany. For practically all of his drawings were engraved and published in the former country, as were most others of a similar nature, with the exception perhaps of those of his pupil, Tempesta, who, living in Rome, and evincing a like fertility and industry, had some of his drawings engraved by Italians. As edition after edition of Stradanus' series were issued by the Galle brothers of Antwerp, and eagerly bought up, the circle of his admirers in northern Europe grew ever wider; but there is no evidence that his work in the picture-book line ever became very popular in Italy, the country of his adoption. There his celebrated Naples frescoes, for Don Juan of Austria, and his equally good designs for tapestry for the Medici Grand Duke, enjoyed far more popularity.

Considering the immense difficulties of transportation which then still handicapped all international and especially all transalpine intercommunication, it is rather curious that the formidable distance intervening between the city on the Arno and the harbor town on the North Sea did not interfere in a more discouraging manner between artist and engraver.

For more than half a century that studio in Florence, of which Stradanus gives us in one of his "arts and crafts" series, caled the Nova Reperta, a characteristic picture, seems to have gone on supplying busy hands in distant Antwerp with material of the most heterogeneous kind. Saints and devils, popes and emperors, holy legends and scenes from purgatory, wars and sieges, land battles and naval engagements, royal progresses and peasant fetes, hunting, fishing and fowling scenes galore, the horses of all nations, the crafts and trades of the civilized world, the discoveries of Columbus and Vespucci, scientific inventions of the day, the working of the silkworm and scores of other subjects of the most diverse nature, were one and all depicted with a realism and with a power of imagination that really amaze one. It shows what an extraordinary demand for illustrations had suddenly sprung up in the second half of the sixteenth century among the nations of northern Europe, as they awoke from the intellectual stupor that had enchained them during mediaeval times.

STANLEY'S EXPLOITS

No explorer before or since has approached the harvest that Henry M. Stanley reaped (says a writer in the New York Sun), and no man of letters, soldiers, or scholar has had such a single lecture tour as Stanley's greatest. In something like ten big cities he received $2,000 for his first appearance. For the first night in another group of cities he received $1,000 and in still another group $500. Traveling in a special car upon which he lived in most places, and accompanied by four or five guests, he ended the tour with $64,000 clear of all expenses. For that first night in New York a charity paid Stanley's agent $5,000 and the receipts from the lecture were $14,763. On the other hand Alexander Graham Bell used to lecture for $25 a night in schoolhouses and the struggling inventor was glad enough of the fee.

Since Teacher Did Not Know.

It was in the primary class of a graded school in a western city, and the day was the 22d of February.

"Now, who can tell me whose birthday this is?" asked the teacher.

A little girl arose timidly.

"Well, Margaret, you may tell us," said the teacher.

"Mine," was the unexpected reply.—Everybody's Magazine

HIS SERMON IN A NUTSHELL

Comprehensive and Succinct Report of What Was Said in the Funeral Oration.

A popular Irishman, beloved for many a mile around his home town, died suddenly. He belonged to several organizations, and the A. O. H. of Bloomville decided to send a representative to his funeral.

The church was packed and the clergyman most sympathetic. In expressing his certainty of immortality he went in for simile.

"We will say," he observed in illustration, "that here is a beautiful watch. The case is good and is studded with diamonds. It loks like the valuable part of the watch, but you can remove the works and they will keep on ticking."

The delegate returned to his home town and was sounded on the topic of the funeral sermon.

"Well," he reported, "the father said that Pat was no Waterbury."

More Profitable.

Walter—Thank you very much, sir.

Old Gent—What the deuce do you mean? I haven't given you anything.

Waiter—No, sir; but I bet No. 19 half a crown you wouldn't tip me.

The Usual Way.

"The doctors have finally decided what caused Smith's illness."

"Had a consultation, eh?"

"No; autopsy."—Judge.

Too Much Password.

Senator Bacon of Georgia passed a constituent around the capitol for a while and then, having some work to do on the floor, conducted his visitor to the senate gallery. After an hour or so the visitor approached a gallery doorkeeper and said:

"My name is Swate. I am a friend of Senator Bacon. He brought me here and I want to go out and look around a bit. I thought that I would tell you so I can get back in."

"That's all right," said the doorkeeper, "but I may not be here when you return. In order to prevent any mistake, I will give you the password, so you can get your seat again."

"What's the word?" Mr. Swate asked.

"Idiosyncrasy."

"What?"

"Idiosyncrasy."

"I guess I'll stay in," said Swate.—Washington Star.

Being Polite to Children.

There is a boy and a girl that I know, they are older than I am and they are so nice. Their father and mother never speak cross to them, always say "If you please" to them; treat them just as they treat grown-up folks, and the children are just as polite as grownup folks and very careful not to hurt the feelings of their father and mother. I like to go there, it is so peaceful. We have splendid games, and when it is time for me to go home the mother says: "Now, my little man, you must say good-by, but you must come and see Willie some other day." And she gives me a big homemade cookie to eat, one with caraway seed in it, and I am happy all the way home. I love that lady.—"Autobiography of a Baby" by Thomas L. Bradford, M. D.

Time Flies.

When the blind woman who plays the accordion saw a genial looking man stop to read her placard she quickened her tune in the expectation that he was going to give her some money, but he gave advice instead.

Said he: "Have you read that sign of yours lately?"

She said she had not.

"Well," said he, "you'd better, and then have it edited. It is dated six years ago and says you have six small children dependent upon your efforts with this instrument for support. Six years works wonder in children, and they must be pretty lusty youngsters by this time. Change that date to 1912."

Caution.

A commercial traveler at a railway restaurant in one of our southern towns included in his order for breakfast two boiled eggs. The old darkey who served him brought three.

"Uncle," said the traveling man, "why in the world did you bring me three boiled eggs? I only ordered two."

"Yes, sir," said the old darkey, bowing and smiling, "I know you did order two, sir, but I brought three because I jus' naturally felt dat one of dem might fail you, sir."—Harper's Weekly.

The young man who tells a girl during leap year that he could listen to her voice all the rest of his days takes desperate chances.

The meanest trick a leap year girl can play on a man who rejects her proposal is to take him at his word.

Don't tax your friends overmuch when you try to make a touch.

The claque has never flourished in England theaters, but is a powerful institution in France, where a "chef de claque" enjoys a recognized status and makes a comfortable income. It is a mistake to suppose that the only duty of claqueurs is to applaud. A well organized claque includes some members who have cultivated the art of infectious laughter. These "chatouilleurs" attend the lighter forms of drama and laugh so heartily and naturally that their neighbors join in, and leave the house, convinced that the play must be a funny one. Then there are the "pleureuses," who are paid to shake with sobs at the right moment during melodramas. These are the real dramatic critics.

A scientific assertion is produced to the effect that there are no germs in the telephone mouthpiece. Those receptacles of language must be sterilized by the heat of the messages poured into them by some unfortunate who has waited 15 minutes to get the curt information that "the line's busy."

W. N. U., Kansas City, No. 18-1912.